

**We claim:**

1. A process for the preparation of expanded millet, the process comprising:
  - a. equilibrating millet grains to optimum moisture by adding additional water and tempering or resting in order to impart pseudo-elastic texture to decorticated millet endosperm,  
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  - b. loosening intracellular intactness of the endosperm by mechanical means without developing fissures to obtain bumped millet,
  - c. drying the bumped millet to optimum level for puffing,
  - d. grading the millet obtained in step (c) to near uniform size by screening through appropriate sieves or screens,  
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  - e. subjecting the grains to high temperature short time treatment in salt, sand or air or such other heat transfer media to prepare expanded millet.
2. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein step (a) above is carried out on hydrothermally treated and decorticated finger millet.  
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3. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the decorticated millet is equilibrated to 15 - 35% moisture level and subjected to bumping or flattening to 0.7 - 1.0 mm thickness and 1.5 - 1.6 mm diameter, mechanically or manually, without causing visible cracks.  
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4. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bumped millet are dried in shade or sun or in mechanical dryer to 10 - 20% moisture content and subjected to high temperature - short time treatment in sand, salt, air or a heat transfer media heated to 200 - 250°C for 15 - 45 seconds.  
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5. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein step (d) is carried out to obtain millet grains with a thickness of 0.8 - 1.0 mm and diameter 1.5 - 1.6 mm.
6. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet prepared is pre-cooked to provide 95-100% carbohydrate digestibility.  
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7. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the millet is selected from the group consisting of finger millet, pearl millet, sorghum and minor millets containing fully or partially gelatinized starch.
8. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the bumped grains are subjected to high temperature short time treatment in sand or salt, heated to 200 - 250°C for 30 - 40 sec and the sand or salt sieved off immediately, or air heated to 180 - 200°C or in a gun popper or fluidized bed dryer, microwave and infra red heaters.

9. Expanded millet when prepared by the process of claim 1 for use as a ready-to-eat snack, supplementary food, alone or in combination with other edible cereals, pulses, oil seeds, fruits and vegetables, and as an ingredient in confectionery.
10. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet is freed from adhering heat transfer media by brushing or aspiration.  
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11. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet obtained is free from seed born microflora.
12. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expansion ratio of the puffed grains range from 5 to 8 times of its original volume without loss of its original spherical shape and with smooth glossy surface, crispy and spongy texture.  
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13. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet contains 4 - 8% protein, 1 - 1.5% fat, 13 -16% dietary fiber with 98% carbohydrate digestibility.
14. A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expanded millet is coated with an edible, fruit or vegetable powder, sweetening agent selected from sugar, malt powder, malt extract, and edible colors.  
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